

CITY OF BOULDER
PLANNING BOARD ACTION MINUTES
May 7, 2015
1777 Broadway, Council Chambers

A permanent set of these minutes and a tape recording (maintained for a period of seven years) are retained in Central Records (telephone: 303-441-3043). Minutes and streaming audio are also available on the web at: <http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/>

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Aaron Brockett, Chair
Bryan Bowen
Crystal Gray
John Putnam
John Gerstle
Leonard May
Liz Payton

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Hella Pannewig, Assistant City Attorney
Susan Meissner, Administrative Assistant III
Charles Ferro, Development Review Manager for CP&S
Elaine McLaughlin, Senior Planner
David Thompson, Civil Engineer- Traffic

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair, **A. Brockett**, declared a quorum at 6:03 p.m. and the following business was conducted.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by **C. Gray** and seconded by **J. Putnam** the Planning Board approved 7-0 the August 28, 2014 minutes.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. **Dean Dinair, 1507 Bluebell Avenue**, thanked Sloane Walbert for explaining the Bluebell project to him. He wanted to assure that the project is sensitive to the neighborhood character. He also felt that the limits for subdivision should be limited.

4. DISCUSSION OF DISPOSITIONS, PLANNING BOARD CALL-UPS/CONTINUATIONS

- A.** Call Up Item: USE REVIEW to establish a 1,605 square foot restaurant, "Troovi Eatery & Juice Bar" in currently unoccupied retail space at Solana Apartments 3060 Pearl Parkway under case no. LUR2015-00025. Expires May 8, 2015.
- B.** Call-Up Item: Minor subdivision review, case no. LUR2015-00008, for the creation of a second residential lot with frontage on 15th Street. Lot 1A to be 7,605 square feet and Lot 2A to be 7,404 square feet. This approval is subject to potential call-up on or before May 11, 2015.
- C.** Call-Up Item: NONCONFORMING USE REVIEW (LUR2015-00017): Request for an expansion to a nonconforming use to remodel the kitchen facilities at the Alpha Chi Omega house located at 1162 12th Street, including mechanical equipment and screening located on the building rooftop and associated ductwork within the rear yard setback. The project site is zoned Residential - High 5 (RH-5). The call-up period expires on May 15, 2015.

Board Questions:

C. Gray asked a question about item 4B.

D. Thompson answered board questions.

None of these items were called up.

5. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

- A.** CONCEPT PLAN & REVIEW - Proposed mixed-use development (Alexan Flatirons) located at McKenzie Junction, 3600 Highway 119 (Diagonal Highway), that includes 295 market-rate multi-family units, 83 affordable-rate multi-family units, associated community buildings and 54,000 SF of commercial office space (with options for partial retail and coffee shop). Reviewed under case no. LUR2015-00028.

Applicant: Bill Holicky

Property Owner: Birch Mountain, LLC

Staff Presentation:

C. Ferro introduced the item.

E. McLaughlin presented the item to the board.

Board Questions:

E. McLaughlin answered questions from the board.

D. Thompson answered questions from the board.

Applicant Presentation:

Bill Holicky, the architect, presented the item to the board.

Board Questions:

Bill Holicky, the architect, answered questions from the board.

1. **Michael O’Keeffe, 4520 Nassan Place**, asked for clarification and spoke in opposition to the project. He did not feel that the location was conducive to residential for health and transportation reasons.
2. **David Williard, 3975 Dehesa Court**, expressed some concerns about this development. He supports affordable housing but noted that this is a loud area and is not a pleasant place to be. He did not think that people would use the proposed open space and would instead go to the park adjacent to his house. He thought it would put pressure on the existing community. He asked that the applicant put a playground into the complex in an area that would be utilized.
3. **Hunter Smith, 5105 Independence Rd**, is a neighbor and felt that this development would impact the rural character of the properties to the north and east. He was concerned about the impacts on traffic and noted that the intersection at Independence is a dangerous intersection; he recommended slowing traffic or adding a traffic light.
4. **John Harneg, 3880 N. 57th Street**, lives east of the development and expressed concerns regarding safety and traffic. The Intersection at Independence and the Diagonal is very dangerous. He thought the impact of the residential units and commercial space would be problematic. Traffic speeds are fast on Independence and 57th Street. The airport is close by and asked where this sits in relation to the flight path.
5. **Holly Hyatt Langdon, 3702 Star Lane**, expressed concerns about the impact of the views of open space and surrounding areas. She did not think that the community would be conducive to bike and bus connections for seniors. She felt that it was in a median and would not be a nice place to live.
6. **Jean Aschenbrenner, 4816 Baldwin Place**, noted that the train tracks will be loud for residents. She noted that the current traffic bottlenecks at that location and causes backups. She did not think that there would be sufficient space to expand the highway. Consider the cost of flood repairs to the open space area.
7. **Bob Murphy, 4075 N. 57th Street**, expressed concerns about the air traffic over that development. Other neighbors in the area already do not like the air traffic. He had traffic concerns as well; there are already traffic jams and this would add pressure to that area. He noted that there are many runners, cyclists and horses that use Independence Road; he wanted to assure the safety of all users.

Board Comments:

Summary:

- Board members did not find the proposed project to be entirely compliant with the BCVP.
- Residential use is allowed per the zoning but many board members did not feel that it was an appropriate use. Though not currently allowed, the board thought business industrial or other light commercial uses could be more appropriate given traffic, noise, siting and accessibility concerns.
- Members recommended that Open Space consider purchasing the property or rezoning it during the BVCP update.

- Some board members recommended that the site be considered for a park and ride. Others did not feel that would be an appropriate use given the existing traffic congestion.
- The edge conditions of the site are challenging. The board members felt that the proposed plan allowed for views of the Flatirons and liked that “soft” edge to the city.
- Move the historic well out into the open space on the site.

Detailed Comments:

Consistency with the BVCP and Land Use

J. Putnam was unsure about this project as it has many contradictory cross currents. Though the current vacant state seems to provide a good edge, it is private property and allowed to be developed. Unless the city changes its mind about acquiring this property, they must allow for it to be developed. Service industrial uses, especially with the Kum and Go adjacent to the property, could be an appropriate use.

L. May did not think that the proposal was entirely consistent w the BVCP policies; it would be better suited as an infill project within the city. He agreed that service industrial uses might make better sense on the site. Given that it has a current land use designation, he didn’t think it was appropriate to say that nothing should be built there. He did not think that office space would be appropriate for the same reason as residential because it is a large traffic generator. He thought uses like service industrial with light traffic impacts were most appropriate.

J. Gerstle agreed that service industrial would be a better use for the site. He expressed concerns about senior housing given the transportation limitations for residents who may not drive. Though the residential use was granted by-right, he did not think that it met the BVCP intentions.

A. Brockett thought that this site would function best as open space and expressed concern about putting residential uses on this site. He did not think that this would be a good place to live given the fumes and noise from the two highways, trains and planes. He thought service industrial or office would be a better use for the site. He could possibly imagine a small amount of residential cloaked within other uses. Though there are bus stops, they are difficult to access and thought cyclists would not likely use the path regularly to run errands. Community Cycles did not advocate for this proposal.

B. Bowen felt warmer to the site than the others. He used to commute by bike through this site and understood why cycling could be a theme for the project and the way to tackle residential on this site.

C. Gray thought that the applicant did a good job with a tough site but did not think the predominant use should be residential. She worried that it would not be a liveable place for residents and felt the site was isolated on an island. She would prefer to see commercial uses and buffer the site as has been proposed.

L. Payton appreciated the staff memo and wanted to incorporate staff's concerns into her comments without reiterating them. She noted that when a development was last proposed on this site, the Planning Board said it was uninhabitable. The Dr. Cogg report said that the traffic will increase considerably in the future and habitability will get worse. She did not think that the residents would open windows or go out to use the open space.

Edge Conditions

J. Putnam felt that the site is challenged, but he did not consider this to be a median. He did not think that a park and ride would be appropriate in this location as the traffic was already problematic. He thought that the McKensie well should be sited to stand out by itself in the field. This could serve as an historical reminder of fossil fuel use.

L. May thought a natural edge to the city would be most effective and suggested that the city should buy this site.

J. Gerstle thought that a park and ride or rest station would be a good use and was worth considering in conjunction with service industrial.

A. Brockett agreed with the applicant that the view of the Flatirons should be the gateway, but thought the proposal was less of a gateway and more of an edge. Keep it subtle to let the views of the Flatirons be the edge. He cited the large art project at the entry point to Longmont. Something of that nature could be incorporated on this site.

B. Bowen agreed that softer edge to town was more appropriate than a large and powerful building. Small houses make good edges from rural highways. The gateway is the view to the flatirons.

C. Gray liked the landscape concept but felt that it would be more natural to continue the softer edge from Four Mile Creek. She did not think that iconic architecture was appropriate and noted that it is unlikely that the city would purchase the site for open space; the city's policy is not to buy Area 1 properties due to cost.

Residential Use

J. Putnam noted that there are other residential sites that have higher noise loads and asked that the applicant address acoustic considerations through design. This will be a rental property and therefore will likely have a higher tolerance for noise. He asked the applicant to return with noise levels in terms of LEQ and day/night levels integrating the train and aircraft considerations. His largest concern about residential uses on this site pertained to the islanding effect. Bike connections could help. Use alternate transit data to show that the site will not be isolated.

A. Brockett thought this site would always be predominantly accessed by cars. Consider incorporating retail that is predominantly accessed by car, i.e. washing machine vendors.

B. Bowen agreed that the site could be good for other uses with less traffic and trips. He thought the proposed neighborhoods functioned well without the open space within them as mountains and views work as open space.

C. Gray thought transition and office uses would be okay for the property but expressed concern about residential use. Some office uses generate less traffic than others. Keep bike connection concept. Don't underestimate Boulder bikers and where they'll ride.

L. Payton felt that the site should be used as a well designed rest stop as opposed to residential. Incorporate interpretive signage with the history of the oil rig, Diagonal Highway, etc. Consider AMPS goals as well; this could be a site for well-designed parking outside of the city to connect to bus service. She felt that the site is a median; the continuity of the median from Boulder to Longmont is important

Transportation and Access

J. Putnam requested that the applicant provide an intense traffic analysis with a TDM plan that includes a large amount of alternate modes and traffic generation potential. Look at planned improvements to sidewalks and access. Include vehicle charging infrastructure. He liked the proposed bike and locker infrastructure.

A. Brockett noted that the proposed underpass is critical and important.

B. Bowen noted that the traffic concerns were important and questioned what the surrounding roads will be like in the future. Look at means for mitigating and funneling traffic. Have good retail exposure and mental mapping for parking. Look at simplifying traffic circulation specifically driving through retail to get to residential areas and the absence of a left hand turn onto Jay Road. Work with the County to add infrastructure connections through adjacent open space.

C. Gray wanted to see a vibrant TDM plan and possible Eco Passes through she noted that bus access is difficult from this site.

L. Payton requested that the applicant provide an analysis of the expected traffic on all adjacent roads in the future, not just traffic to and from the development.

Other Comments

B. Holicky, the applicant, noted that service industrial and some of those uses discussed by the Planning Board are not currently allowed on this site.

L. May recommended that the BVCP update consider this parcel and make other uses allowable. He did not feel that the current land use and zoning are appropriate for this parcel because of its isolation and location between highways.

5. MATTERS FROM THE PLANNING BOARD, PLANNING DIRECTOR, AND CITY ATTORNEY

- The Planning Board will meet at 5 p.m. before the next meeting to discuss findings from the APA conference.
- **Brockett** mentioned that staff might consider a two night hearing for the SPARK project.
- BDAB would like feedback from the Planning Board where they would be the most useful.
- **B. Bowen** noted that it is difficult for the Planning Board to make changes to architecture during site review; it could be appropriate to send such items to BDAB and to clarify their focus areas.
- **L. May** thought it would be valuable for BDAB to focus on the architecture. There have been times that projects went to BDAB before they came to Planning Board and there were problems with discrepancies in feedback/opinions. He thought it would be better for projects to go to BDAB after Concept Review and before Site Review. That would allow the boards to work together better. He thought Design Review on Landmarks Board works well and suggested instating a similar process utilizing BDAB.
- **A. Brockett** requested that BDAB concentrate on architecture and refrain from commenting on use, scale and mass.
- **C. Gray** agreed and asked that BDAB also address public realm.
- **L. May** noted that he and **C. Gray** are on the Housing Process Committee. Council is interested in having a similar committee for the Comp Plan update. Reserve space to discuss this at the June agenda.

6. DEBRIEF MEETING/CALENDAR CHECK

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Board adjourned the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

APPROVED BY

Board Chair

DATE